

REMARKS

In response to the Office Action dated February 12, 2003, claim 23 is amended. Claims 1-23 are now active in this application. No new matter has been added.

The indication that claims 7, 8, 10, 11, 16 and 21-23 are allowable is noted with appreciation. However, claim 23 is amended to address an error that is currently present in the claim.

REJECTION OF CLAIMS UNDER 35 U.S.C. § 102 AND § 103

I. Claims 1-5, 9, 12-15, 17 and 20 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. §102(e) as being anticipated by Kida et al. (U.S. Patent No. 5,852,764, hereinafter Kida).

The rejection is respectfully traversed.

Independent claim 1 recites, *inter alia*:

a plurality of trays for receiving discharged sheets bearing ***a formed*** image, a setting means for selectively setting ***the form*** of output with respect to at least one of said plurality of trays, and
an image forming unit for ***forming an image on the sheets in the form of output*** set by said setting means ***when the tray which the form of output has been set is selected*** as the destination of discharged sheet. (Emphasis added)

Thus, what is required in claim 1 is that the image forming unit forms the image on the sheet in the form of output that has been set when the tray with which the form of output has been set is selected as the sheet discharge destination. In contrast, what is disclosed in Kida is setting “post image forming processing” with respect to each image forming mode. The “post image forming processing” is clearly disclosed in Kida to be the “discharge state” of the sheets P (with images formed on them are), and the “discharge state” of the sheets P is either with the images face-up, or images face-down. There is absolutely no disclosure or suggestion in Kida of

forming an image(s) on the sheet in the form that has been set by a setting means, by selecting the tray, for which that form of output has been set by the setting means, as the sheet discharge destination. All that can be said of Kida is that the “discharge state” of sheets P (with images formed on them are), which is either with the images face-up, or images face-down, can be set to a tray and this tray can be selected as the sheet discharge destination. Consequently, the “discharge state” of the sheets P on which images have been formed will be what was set for the selected tray; i.e., the images will be face-up or images face-down.

Thus, independent claim 1, and claims 2-5 and 9 depending from claim 1, are patentable over Kida, even when considered in view of

Independent claim 12 recites, *inter alia*:

a setting means for selectively *setting the size of sheet* with respect to at least one of said plurality of trays, and
 an image forming unit for *supplying sheets of the size set* by said setting means and forming an image on the supplied sheet *when the tray which the size of sheet has been set is selected* as the discharged destination. (Emphasis added)

There is absolutely no disclosure or suggestion in Kida of *supplying sheets of a size set by a setting means*, by selecting the tray, for which that size sheet has been set by the setting means, as the sheet discharge destination. While Kida does disclose setting via a tray the “discharge state” of sheets P (with images formed on them are), which is either with the images face-up, or images face-down, there is clearly nothing about setting to one of a plurality of discharge trays a particular size sheet on which an image is to be formed, and then forming an image on the particular size sheet by selecting that tray as the sheet discharged destination for the sheets on which the image is formed.

Consequently, independent claim 12, as well as claims 13-15 depending from claim 12, are patentable over Kida.

Referring now to independent claim 17, as shown in Fig. 8 of Kida and the accompanying description thereof, Kida discloses the technology to set the combination of discharge trays (1 or 2) and REVERSE (YES or NO) for the each image formation mode (COPY MODE, FAX MODE or PRINTER MODE) from the operation panel. As stated at column 19, lines 46-60, the various combination of discharge trays (1 or 2) and REVERSE (YES or NO) are preset in a table as discharge modes A, B, C and D, and the discharge mode that is used is selected according to the chosen image formation mode (see, Fig. 10).

If COPY MODE is chosen as an image formation mode, for example, MODE # (TRAY:1, REVERSE:NO) is automatically selected, and in the same way, if PRINTER MODE is chosen, MODE A (TRAY:1, REVERSE: YES) is selected. Consequently, the setting of REVERSE is not always the same, even if the same tray is selected. This means that REVERSE, which is a post handling of sheets, has not been set for trays, but for image formation modes.

In contrast, the present invention set forth in independent claim 17, has the element “a setting means for selectively setting a post handling condition of discharged sheets with respect to at least one of said plurality of tray”. That is, post handling conditions of discharged sheets are selectively set for discharge trays in advance.

The present invention also has the element “a sheet processing unit for performing the post handling of sheets based on the post handling condition set by said setting means when the tray which the post handling condition has been set is selected as the discharged destination”. Namely, when the discharge tray is chosen and the image forming process is executed, discharged sheets are processed under the post handling condition which has been set for the chosen discharge tray. The user can, therefore, easily obtain the uniform printed matter for multiple jobs only by choosing the discharge tray.

As mentioned above, although Kida describes to set the combination of discharge trays and REVERSE (YES or NO) for the each image formation mode, the reference fails to disclose or suggest the elements "a setting means" and "a sheet processing unit" that are recited in independent claim 17 of the present application..

Consequently, independent claim 17, as well as claims 18-20 depending from claim 17, are patentable over Kida.

II. Claim 6 is rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as being unpatentable over Kida in view of Matsui et al. (U.S. Patent No. 5,921,537).

However, as claim 6 depends from claim 1, which is patentable over Kida, claim 6 is patentable over Kida also, even when considered in view of Matsui et al.

III. Claims 18 and 19 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as being unpatentable over Kida in view of Taneda (U.S. Patent No. 5,236,185).

However, as claim 18 and 19 depend from claim 17, which is patentable over Kida, claims 18 and 19 are patentable over Kida also, even when considered in view of Taneda.

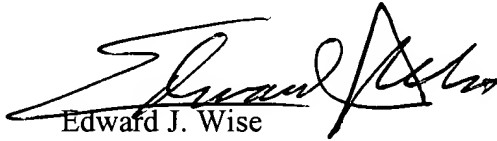
CONCLUSION

Accordingly, it is urged that the application is in condition for allowance, an indication of which is respectfully solicited. If there are any outstanding issues that might be resolved by an interview or an Examiner's amendment, Examiner is requested to call Applicants' attorney at the telephone number shown below.

To the extent necessary, a petition for an extension of time under 37 C.F.R. 1.136 is hereby made. Please charge any shortage in fees due in connection with the filing of this paper, including extension of time fees, to Deposit Account 500417 and please credit any excess fees to such deposit account.

Respectfully submitted,

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